

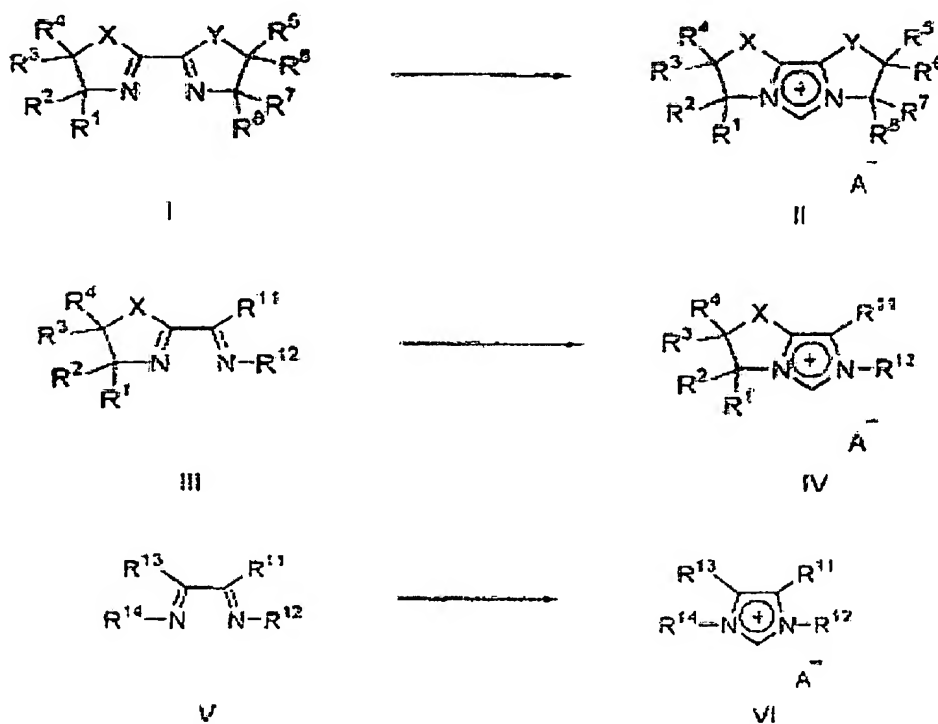
AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

1.-22. (Canceled)

23. (New) A process for preparing an imidazolium salt of the formulae II, IV or VI, said process comprising reacting the corresponding substrate of the formulae I, III or V:



where

R¹, R², R³, R⁴, R⁵, R⁶, R⁷, R⁸, R⁹, R¹⁰, R¹¹, R¹², R¹³ and R¹⁴ are the same or different and are saturated or unsaturated, straight-chain, branched or cyclic, unsubstituted or substituted C₁₋₁₀-alkyl, C₂₋₅-alkenyl, C₂₋₅-alkynyl, C₇₋₁₉-aralkyl or C₆₋₁₄-aryl substituents, or R¹, R², R³, R⁴, R⁵, R⁶, R⁷, R⁸, R¹¹ and R¹³ may also be hydrogen or, together, form fused, substituted or unsubstituted substituents having 3-7 carbon atoms, R¹¹ and R¹³ may also be -OR¹⁶, -SR¹⁷ or -NR¹⁸R¹⁹, in which R¹⁶, R¹⁷, R¹⁸ and R¹⁹ may each be as defined for the R¹ to R⁸ and R¹¹ to R¹⁴ substituents, and R¹⁶, R¹⁷,

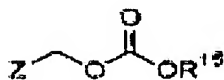
R^{18} , R^{19} , one of the R^1 , R^2 , R^7 , R^8 , R^{12} and R^{14} substituents may also be a linker L to a further imidazolium salt of the formula II, IV or VI,

X is O, S, an NR^9 or $CR^{9a}R^{9b}$ group in which R^9 , R^{9a} and R^{9b} are each hydrogen, saturated or unsaturated, straight-chain, branched or cyclic, unsubstituted or substituted C_{1-10} -alkyl, C_{2-5} -alkenyl, C_{2-5} -alkynyl, C_{7-19} -aralkyl or C_{6-14} -aryl substituents,

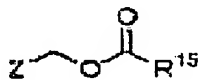
Y is O, S, an NR^{10} or $NR^{10a}R^{10b}$ group in which R^{10} , R^{10a} , R^{10b} are hydrogen, saturated or unsaturated, straight-chain, branched or cyclic, unsubstituted or substituted C_{1-10} -alkyl, C_{2-5} -alkenyl, C_{2-5} -alkynyl, C_{7-19} -aralkyl or C_{6-14} aryl substituents, and

A^- is a mono- or polyvalent, organic or inorganic anion or a metal complex ion,

with a combination of an alkylating agent of the formula VII, VIII or IX:



VII



VIII



IX

where Z is a leaving group and R^{15} is as defined for R^3 , and a metal salt of the formula:

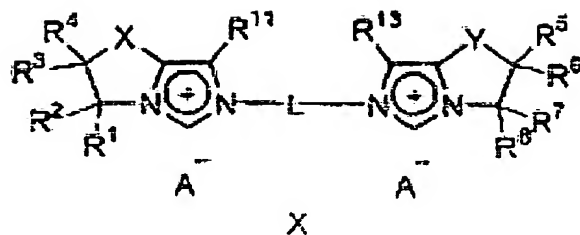


where M is a mono- or polyvalent metal cation, a tetraorganoammonium compound or a triorganosilyl group, and A is as defined above for A^- , as a promoter of the reaction.

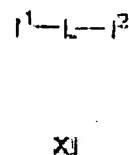
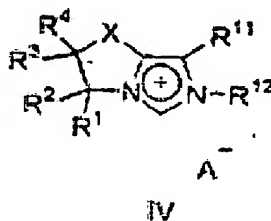
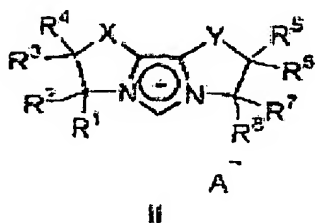
24. (New) The process as claimed in claim 23, wherein R^1 , R^2 , R^3 , R^4 , R^5 , R^6 , R^7 , R^8 , R^9 , R^{9a} , R^{9b} , R^{10} , R^{10a} , R^{11} , R^{12} , R^{13} , R^{14} and R^{15} are the same or different and are each saturated or unsaturated, straight-chain, branched or cyclic, unsubstituted or substituted C_{1-6} -alkyl, C_{2-4} alkenyl, C_{2-4} -alkynyl, C_{7-10} -aralkyl or phenyl groups.

25. (New) The process as claimed in claim 23, wherein the mono- or polyvalent, organic or inorganic anion A^- in the formulae II, IV and VI is a sulfate, halide, pseudohalide, borate, phosphate or metal complex ion or an optionally halogenated sulfonate, carboxylate or acetylacetonate ion.
26. (New) The process as claimed in claim 25, wherein A^- is a triflate, mesylate, tosylate, nonaflate, tresylate, benzenesulfonate, brosylate, nosylate, fluorosulfonate, tetraphenylborate, tetrakis[3,5- bis(trifluoromethyl)phenyl]borate (BARF), tetrafluoroborate, hexafluorophosphate, hexafluoroantimonate, acetate, trifluoroacetate, perchlorate, tetracarbonylcobaltate or hexafluoroferrate(III) ion.
27. (New) The process as claimed in claim 26, wherein A^- in the formulae II, IV and VI is a triflate ion.
28. (New) The process as claimed in claim 23, wherein $R^1, R^2, R^3, R^4, R^5, R^6, R^7, R^8, R^9, R^{9a}, R^{9b}, R^{10}, R^{10a}, R^{10b}, R^{11}, R^{12}, R^{13}, R^{14}$ and R^{15} are substituted by one or more, identical or different amine, nitro, nitrile, isonitrile, ether, alcohol, aldehyde or ketone groups, carboxylic acid derivatives, halogenated hydrocarbon groups, carbohydrate, phosphane, phosphane oxide, phosphane sulfide, phosphole groups, phosphite derivatives, aliphatic or aromatic sulfonic acid derivatives, the salts, esters or amides thereof, silyl functions, boryl groups or heterocyclic substituents.
29. (New) The process as claimed in claim 28, wherein one of the $R^1, R^2, R^7, R^8, R^{12}$ and R^{14} groups is substituted by an azolium salt or a pyridine ring.
30. (New) The process as claimed in claim 23, wherein the leaving group Z is a halide, pseudohalide or carboxylate.
31. (New) The process as claimed in claim 30, which comprises using an alkylating agent of the formula VII, VIII or IX, where Z is a halide and R^{15} is an unsubstituted or substituted phenyl, benzyl or C_1 - C_4 -alkyl groups which may in each case contain one or more substituents.

32. (New) The process as claimed in claim 31, wherein the alkylating agent used is chloromethyl pivalate, chloromethyl butyrate, chloromethyl ethyl ether, (2-methoxyethoxy)methyl chloride or (2-chloromethoxy-ethyl)trimethylsilane.
33. (New) The process as claimed in claim 32, wherein the alkylating agent used is chloromethyl pivalate.
34. (New) The process as claimed in claim 23, wherein the mono- or polyvalent metal cation M is a silver(I), alkali metal and alkaline earth metal, lanthanide, lead(II), mercury(II), cadmium(II), thallium(I), copper(II), zinc(II) or aluminum(III) ion, the tetraorganoammonium compound is a tetraalkylammonium compound and the triorganosilyl group is a trialkylsilyl group.
35. (New) The process as claimed in claim 23, wherein a metal salt of the formula MA is used where M is silver(I) and A is a sulfate, halide, pseudohalide, borate, phosphate or metal complex ion or an optionally halogenated sulfonate, carboxylate or acetylacetonate ion.
36. (New) The process as claimed in claim 35, wherein A is a triflate ion.
37. (New) The process as claimed in claim 23, wherein one of the R^1 , R^2 , R^7 , R^8 , R^{12} and R^{14} substituents is a linker L to a further imidazolium salt of the formula II, IV or VI.
38. (New) The process as claimed in claim 37, wherein L is a C_{1-4} alkylene, C_{5-12} -cycloalkylene, C_{6-12} -arylene or C_{6-12} heteroarylene group which may optionally be substituted or be interrupted by a heteroatom or a cyclic substituents.
39. (New) The process as claimed in claim 38, wherein the imidazolium salt has the general formula X:



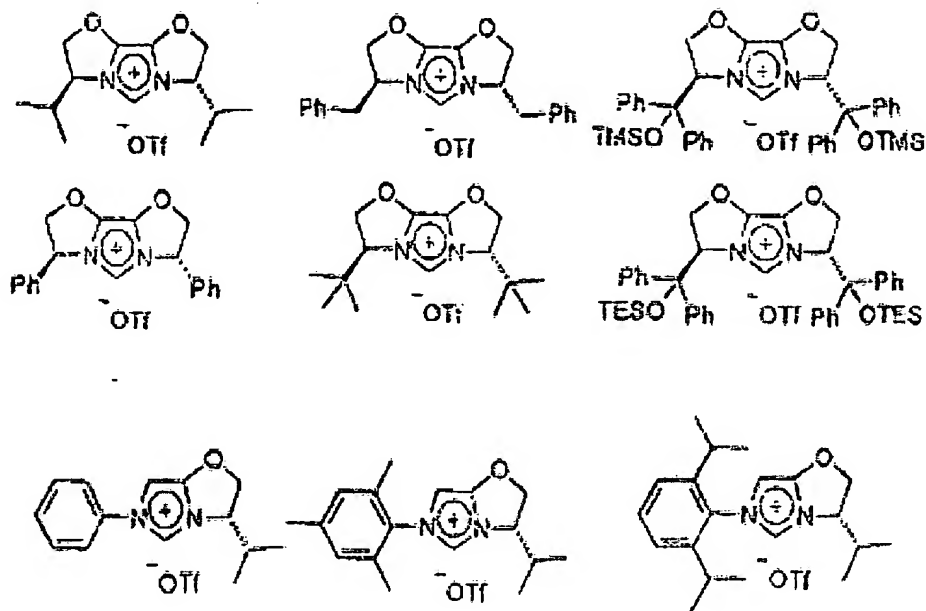
40. (New) The process as claimed in claim 23, wherein the alkylating agent and metal salt are used in at least a stoichiometric amount based on the particular substrate.
41. (New) The process as claimed in claim 23, which further comprises preparing beforehand one a reagent composed of the metal salt and the alkylating agent.
42. (New) The process as claimed in claim 23, wherein the substrates are reacted in an organic solvent.
43. (New) The process as claimed in claim 42, wherein the organic solvent is acetone, diethyl ether, methyl tertbutyl ether, petroleum ether, acetonitrile, propionitrile, ethyl acetate, benzene, toluene, xylene, benzine, 1,2-dichloroethane, chloroform or methylene chloride.
44. (New) The process as claimed in claim 43, wherein the solvent is methylene chloride.
45. (New) A compound of the general formula II, IV or XI:

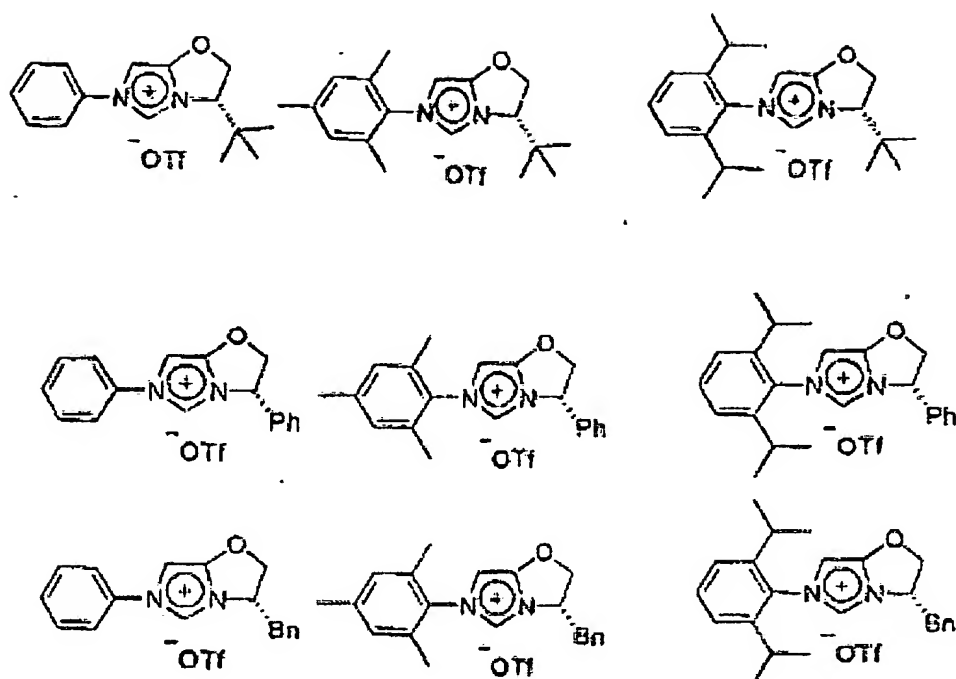


where

I^1 and I^2 are identical or different imidazolium salts of the formulae II, IV and VI which are joined to L at the position of the R^1 , R^2 , R^7 , R^8 , R^{12} or R^{14} substituents, with the proviso that I^1 and I^2 are not both an imidazolium salt of the formulae VI, the imidazolium salt of the formula VI, R^1 , R^2 , R^3 , R^4 , R^5 , R^6 , R^7 , R^8 , R^{11} , R^{12} , R^{13} , R^{14} , X, Y, L and A^- are each as defined in claim 23.

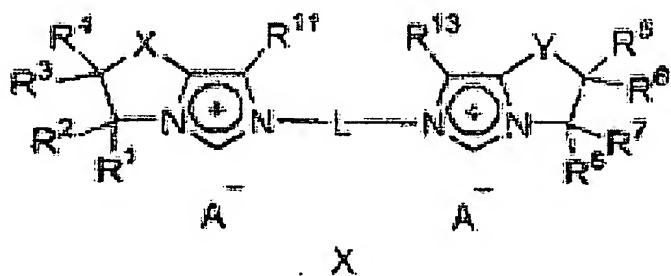
46. (New) A compound as claimed in claim 45, which has the following structural formulae:



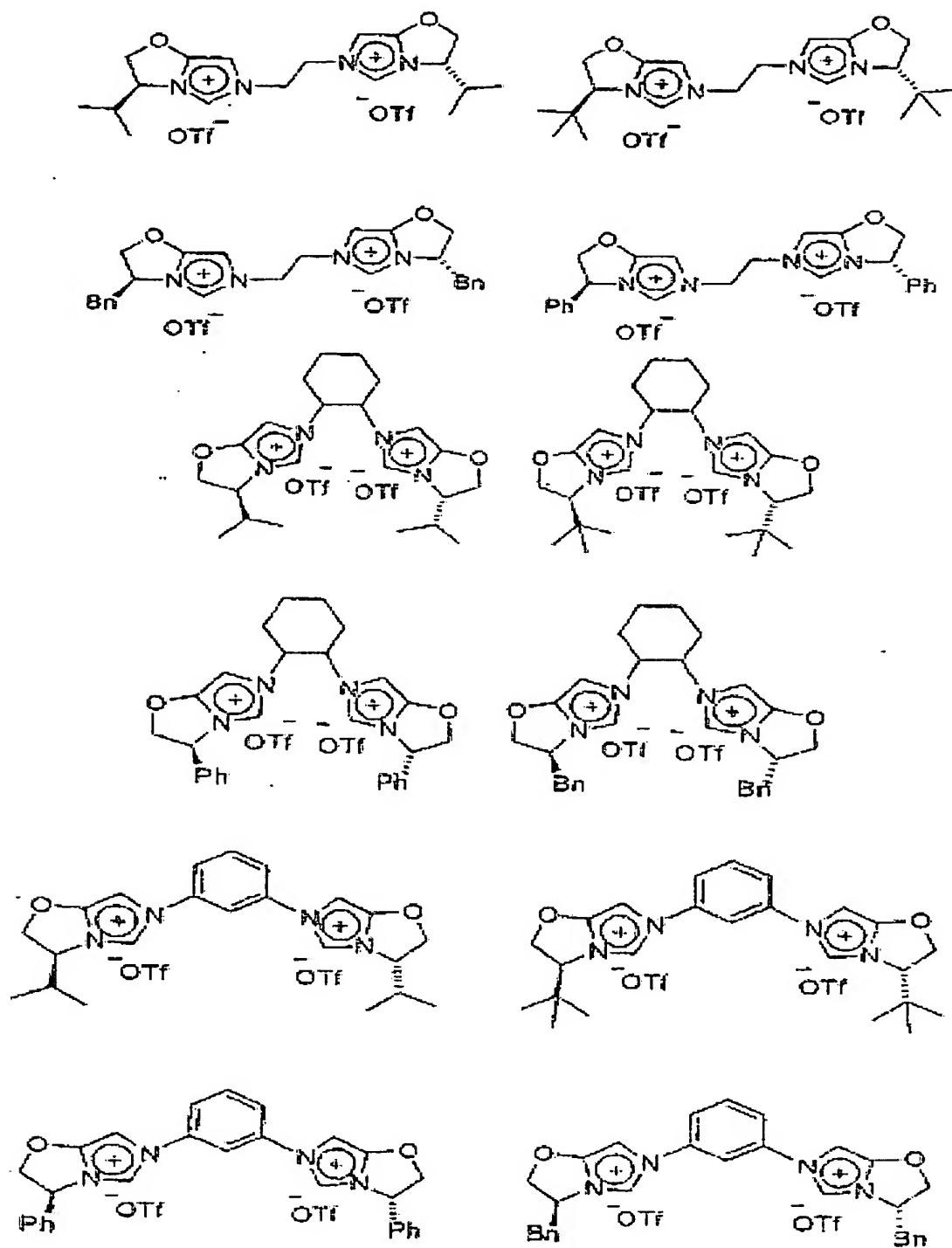


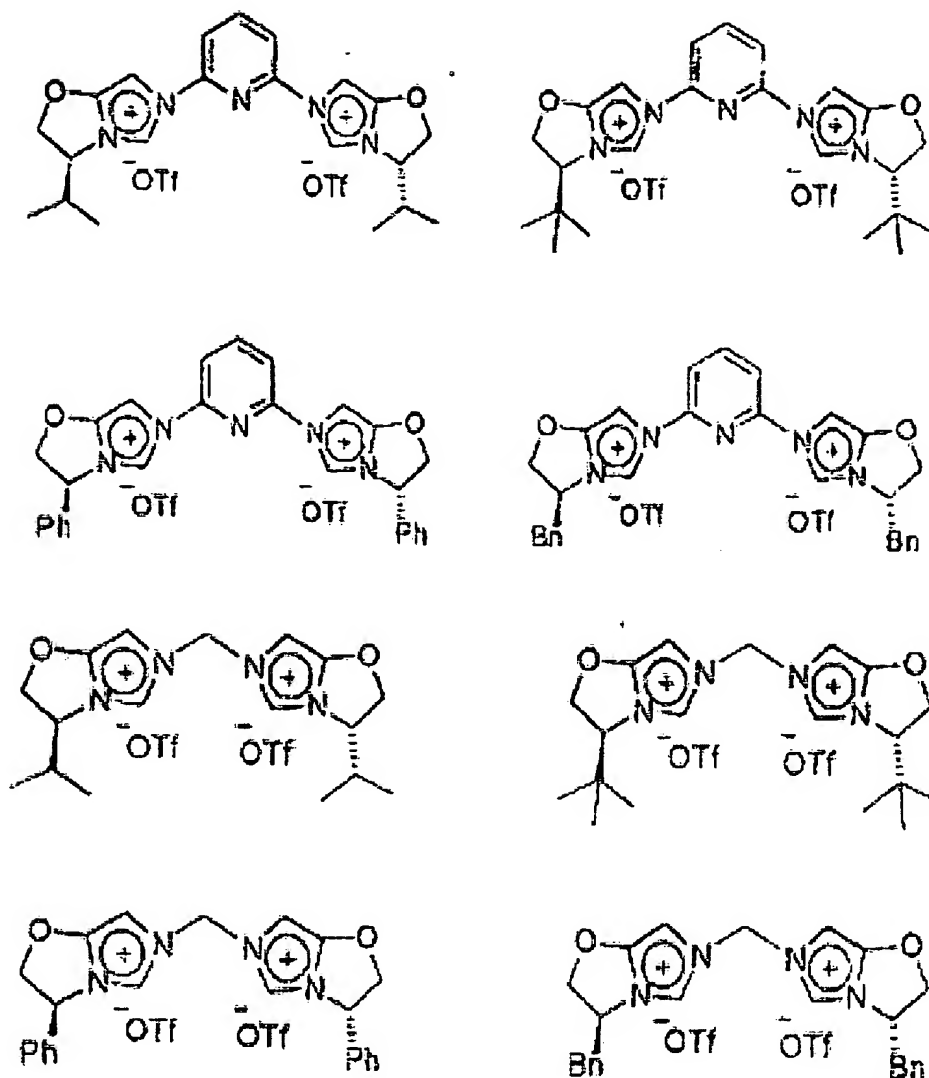
where OTf is trifluoromethanesulfonate (triflate), Ph is phenyl, TMS is trimethylsilyl, TES is triethylsilyl and Bn is benzyl.

47. (New) A compound as claimed in claim 45, which is a compound of the formula X:



48. (New) A compound as claimed in claim 47, which has the following structural formulae:





where OTf is trifluoromethanesulfonate (triflate), Ph is phenyl and Bn is benzyl.

49. (New) A compound having the structure of the compound of claim 46, but having tetrafluoroborate, mesylate, tosylate, nonaflate or hexafluoroantimonate instead of triflate as the counteranion.
50. (New) A compound having the structure of the compound of claim 48, but having tetrafluoroborate, mesylate, tosylate, nonaflate or hexafluoroantimonate instead of triflate as the counteranion.

51. (New) A method for preparing a catalyst in the form of metal complexes of N-heterocyclic carbenes, said method comprising deprotonating a compound as claimed in claim 45.